



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30(2820)

JUN 13 2012

Memorandum

To: All Employees

Through: Regional Director, Midwest Region

From: Associate Director, Interpretation and Education

Subject: *Expressions of Freedom*: Commemoration of the 150th
Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation

Michael Reynolds 6-13-12
[Signature]

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, setting in motion an end to slavery. The fulfillment of that promise has been a long and difficult journey for us as a nation. Almost 100 years later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others, continued the pursuit of universal American civil rights and worked to end racial segregation by uniting a generation in equality.

The National Park Service, in partnership with the African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation, is launching *Expressions of Freedom*, a nationwide student art competition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. Encouraging youth to explore the enduring themes of our nation's struggles for freedom, and through their art showcase the meanings of parks to new audiences, are the goals for the *Expressions of Freedom* competition.

We encourage all parks to participate by promoting the competition with your partners and within your community, especially those parks that tell the stories of struggles for freedom. *Expression of Freedom* through art embraces the larger goal of Arts Afire within *A Call to Action*. A brochure and promotional poster can be downloaded from the website (*see below*), along with additional details about the competition. This fall and winter, we will be looking for interested parks, program offices, partners and individuals to help organize regional juries.

Submissions for this student art contest will be accepted from students 13-18 years of age in three categories: photography, poetry and digital short films. Artistic works will explore meanings of freedom and equality. The first-place winners in each category will receive a \$2,500 academic scholarship, second-place winners will receive \$1,000 in academic scholarships, and winning entries will be featured in a nationwide traveling exhibit. Submissions are due on October 15, 2012.

Please contact Alexa Viets, Centennial Coordinator at 202-208-4530, if you, your park or your program are interested in helping to organize a regional jury or if you have any questions about the competition. Please encourage educators and students to participate in this competition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and to make their own declarations of freedom.

For more information visit the *Expressions of Freedom* website at www.nps.gov/freedom.